

Luka Novak is also a victim of the lobbyists

Yesterday, the government unexpectedly decided to dismiss the Director of the Intellectual Property Office, Luka Novak, as of 31 August. Unofficially, Minister Stanko Stepišnik is said to have been pressured by various lobbies over the announced amendments to the Copyright and Related Rights Act.

Politics

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The same fate that befell the then director of the Intellectual Property Office, Jurij Žurej, after Radovan Žerjav arrived at the Economy Ministry when the second government of Janez Janša took office, has now been experienced by his successor, Luka Novak.

Yesterday, Alenka Bratušek's government [led by the centre-left ["Positive Slovenia"](#) party] adopted a decision to dismiss him from his post as of 31 August.



Luka Novak bids farewell to the Intellectual Property Office.

(Photo: Luka Cjuha/Dnevnik archive)

Despite collaboration with SLS, the dismissal was not politically motivated.

"They did not give reasons for my dismissal, as they are not even obliged to do so by law," Novak accepted yesterday's decision rather stoically. Asked whether he had sensed a possible dismissal in the air for a long time, he replied that he had not. Nor did he want to comment on the reasons why he had to leave office.

"The Office is working well, there have been no disputes and I have done my job correctly and professionally. The government has obviously decided to put someone else in this position. This is its legitimate and legal right," explained Novak, who prepared the programme for culture for the [centre-right] Slovenian People's Party ([SLS](#)) before the last national elections, but was not a member of the party.

It is precisely because of this fact that our sources stress that Novak's dismissal was not politically motivated. Because the Ministry of Economy, in cooperation with the Office, is preparing amendments to the Copyright and Related Rights Act, there is said to be external pressure on the Minister of Economy, Stanko Stepišnik, to get rid of the current Director of the Office.

"There are as many lobbies there are interests involved in the preparation of amendments to this law. In addition, the staff of the office is also divided," our sources warn.

It already started at a meeting in early March

Recall that, according to media reports, Novak had prematurely interrupted a meeting with music and audiovisual creators at the beginning of March because of "raised tones and banging on the table".

"The initiators of the meeting moved from an initially correct attitude to an openly aggressive and even threatening modus, so the representatives of the Office assessed that the level of discussion no longer corresponded to the standards of civilised behaviour, and not at all to the culture of dialogue between civil society and the state body, and we ended the meeting after an hour and a half", Novak explained the reasons for the termination of the meeting to the newspaper "**Finance**" at the time.

That the government and Stepišnik were apparently under pressure from various interest groups to dismiss Novak in a hurry is also evidenced by the fact that it was not known until Monday that there would be a change in the leadership of the office. Moreover, the government did not even appoint his (at least temporary) successor yesterday, although there were already rumours that the first director of the Office, the retired Bojan Pretnar, might take over. Let us add that Novak will leave the Office with the severance package due to him under the Civil Servants Act.

"This was my first excursion to the public sector after 20 years in the private sector, and now I am going back to the private sector," the departing Novak told us.

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